

I am writing in support of delaying or suspending the implementation of the requirements regarding reading models or programs.

All children deserve a quality education with engaged and informed teachers who have the freedom to meet students' individual student needs. As a parent of two elementary aged students and one preschooler, who will be entering kindergarten this fall, I do **not** want my children to learn from a boxed curriculum that has been purchased from a publishing company. I want all students to be taught by an informed educator who has agency and freedom to make informed decisions. I am against the use of any scripted curriculum under any circumstances, but I continued to be surprised by the choices of the State of Connecticut regarding reading curriculum when according to Massachusetts's CURATE rubric (which the CT site refers parents to instead of providing its own rubric), none of the programs being pushed by the State of Connecticut have the data to even show that they are successful or better than the current programs being used in our public schools. To me, this mandate appears to be a decision hastily made due to the most current iteration of the "Reading Wars" and not on solid data.

Professionally, as an Instructional Coach with a PhD in Literacy education, I understand what it takes to help students grow in their reading skills, interest, and achievement. It requires the flexibility of multiple resources, training, literacy coaching, literacy interventionist, and monitoring to help each and every student grow as a reader. It is **never** a single strategy or program. Furthermore, the mandate is undoing the work that many districts have dedicated to finding the right balance that is in a continuous mode of reflection, research and refinement.

The state mandate is a recipe for continued failure. This mandate and the approved reading programs are limited. Some do not even have the phonics component that is required for approval. There is a notable lack of culturally responsive representation because most of the characters are animals. It is not comprehensive because reading is more than just phonics. Reading includes joy, engagement, and experiences that our students can connect to. These programs are also telling students what to think and not how to think critically. If we do not teach students how to think critically, or provide them with choice, we are not preparing our students for an ever-changing global world where they can be socially responsible citizens.

I would like to propose a suspension of this mandate. During this suspension, there should be a collaborative opportunity for Literacy Coaches, Literacy Interventionists and Special Education teachers from every district to work directly with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success and the Reading Leadership Implementation Council in order to provide accurate accounts, information, and lived experiences of the children they work closely with every day. I would be happy to participate. If not every district, then a wide selection of districts that represent all demographics from Suburban communities, Urban communities and Rural communities. The current members of the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success and the Reading Leadership Implementation Council members do not represent a diverse perspective or experience of educators, literacy coaches, interventionist or special education teachers. Nor do they represent the students they claim to support. Thank you.